

What is Claimed:

1. A method of fulfilling requests for information data from a network client (80), said information data being accessible from a network server (90) and being displayable through a form-based format hypertext document whereby said information data is provided by the filling of dedicated form fields in said hypertext document, the method being characterized in that it comprises the steps of:

- receiving (13) at the network client, sent from the network server, a hypertext document and a program component;
- displaying (31) the hypertext document, said hypertext document having initially no information data filling its form fields;
- obtaining (41) a request for information from a user of said network client through a user interface presented to the user as a result of the displaying of the hypertext document, and calling (43) the program component for obtaining the requested information data;
- upon determination (51) that said requested information data is already or not stored in a buffer memory allocated to the program component in the network client, obtaining (57) the requested data by retrieving them from the buffer memory, or downloading (53, 55, 57) them from the network server;

- filling (59) the appropriate form fields in the hypertext document with the obtained information data, and displaying the hypertext document with the requested information data contained therein.

2. Method according to claim 1, wherein the user is provided with the capability of modifying at least some of the information data which is presented to him, by changing the content of the corresponding form fields through the user interface, the method comprising the further steps of:

- automatically retrieving (701) the modified information data contained in the form fields and calling (701) the program component in order to store (703) the modified information data in the buffer memory;

- in response to an action (705) performed by the user through the user interface, said action being performed independently of the retrieval of modified information data, calling (705) the program component in order to upload (709) to the network server the modified information data.

3. Method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the step of displaying (31) the hypertext document, is preceded by a step (20) of user authentication, upon which, if the user connection to the network server is accepted, said displaying step (31) is performed.

4. Method according to claims 1 to 3, wherein said hypertext document is a HTML document and wherein the content of the form fields is managed by a script program referenced in said HTML document by appropriate tags, said script program being notably responsible for calling the program component for triggering a download of information data requested by the user, for automatically retrieving from the form fields modified information data and calling the program component for temporarily storing the modified information data in the buffer memory, and for calling the program component for triggering an upload of previously stored modified information data.

5. Method according to claim 4, wherein the step (41) of obtaining a request for information from a user, includes the following sub-steps:

- using (403) said script program to retrieve selection data entered (401) by the user through said user interface, said selection data defining a category of information to be looked up;
- using (405, 407) said program component for sending (405) said selection data to the network server, for receiving (407) in response, from the server, a record identification list corresponding to the information category selected, and storing (407) said identification list into the buffer memory;
- using (413) said script program to call the program component

in order to retrieve information data relative to a current record identified in said record identification list.

6. Method according to claim 4 or 5, wherein said HTML document includes at least two frames and wherein said script program and said program component are referenced in the HTML document within two different frames.

7. Method according to claim 4, 5 or 6, wherein said script program is a JavaScript program.

8. Method according to any one of claims 4 to 7, wherein said program component is a Java applet referenced in said HTML document by appropriate tags.

9. Method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said hypertext document and/or said information data is downloaded or uploaded from or to the network server by using the HTTP protocol.

10. A computer system comprising means adapted for carrying out a method of fulfilling requests for information according to any one of claims 1 to 9.

11. A computer program comprising software code portions for performing a method of fulfilling requests for information data according to any one of claims 1 to 9, when said computer program is loaded into and executed by a computer system.

12. A computer program product stored on a computer usable medium, comprising computer readable program means for causing a computer to perform a method of fulfilling requests for information data according to any one of claims 1 to 9.

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